Volume 19 No. 8 December 2008

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

THE *OLYMPIAN* IS OUTRAGED!

Disagreeing with the City Council and other forms of terrorism are "hurtful" and must be stopped

by Sandy Mayes

When a newspaper has a monopoly in a community, as the *Olympian* does in ours, it wields considerable power to frame the issues and control the story. How an issue gets spun in our local daily newspaper here in Olympia often depends on how it can be used to advance an agenda. When favored policies or politicians cannot be supported on their merits, when facts and logic do not work in their favor, the strategy focuses instead on marginalizing, demonizing, and silencing opponents. Questioning the character or competence of politicians whose views are at odds with the paper's own agenda is a time tested tactic. When a politician's views line up perfectly with that agenda, local events will be spun in a manner designed to deflect criticism from that politician and any unpopular positions which both he and the newspaper champion.

Such is the case with the recent anonymous attacks on Councilmember Jeff Kingsbury. At a time when the Olympia City Council's popularity appears to be at an all-time low, for moving forward on the isthmus rezone and other unpopular measures promoted by the *Olympian*, the paper is framing the story in such a way as to stifle dissent. A few anonymous acts of vandalism and some defamatory messages are being exploited by the *Olympian* editors to draw an implied association between those anonymous tactics and any open expression of views similar to the ones ostensibly reflected in the tactics. The goal is to generalize the outrage over the attacks on Kingsbury, directing it at any person or group actively opposing his policies and criticizing his behaviors on the City Council.

> The Olympia City Council's popularity appears to be at an all-time low, but you wouldn't know it by reading the *Olympian*.

On a scale which defines such acts of vandalism and defamation as forms of "terrorism," we might just as well compare the City Council and the *Olympian* to the Bush administration and Fox News, for the manner in which the latter two exploited the events of 9/11 in promoting a preordained agenda and stifling dissent through the questioning of loyalties. In both cases, facts , logic and public opinion are ignored by those in power, while the media wing of the power structure employs disinformation and personal attack, even as it decries such tactics when employed by the "terrorists."

Anonymous acts of vandalism and defamation

On Nov 21, the *Olympian* reported that once again City Councilmember Kingsbury had been the target of an anonymous personal attack. This time it came in the form of a postcard falsely signed in his name, sent to several local churches and social service agencies. The text on the postcard opens with relatively benign satirical references to Kingsbury's role in local politics. From there, it quickly devolves into a repugnant application of double-entendres, implying that he is soliciting sex with "young boys" through his theater work—playing on homophobic attitudes and stereotypes about gay sexuality.

In July, a person or group calling itself the Nihilist Assault Group (NAG) claimed credit for throwing paint-filled light bulbs at Kingsbury's place of business, the Capitol Playhouse. In a message posted on various indymedia sites, NAG cited Kingsbury's positions on Camp Quixote, the noise ordinance, and the proposed isthmus condo project as the motive behind the vandalism. The post was mostly a personal, ad hominem attack and leveled this threat: "We will make sure you pay the price for meddling in things it is best to leave alone."

On July 10, the *Olympian* quoted Kings-

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continues on page 3

The people of Olympia versus the Olympia City Council

THE CONTINUING TUG-OF-WAR OVER THE ISTHMUS

by Janet Blanding

"It ain't over until it's paved over," declared Bonnie Jacobs of Friends of the Waterfront at a recent citizens forum to save the isthmus. Though it was a warm, sunny Saturday morning, the Columbia room in the Capitol basement was filled to capacity, standing room only. Event organizers made several trips to the cafeteria to retrieve more chairs to accommodate the nearly 180 people who wanted to know what could be done to stop the unpopular proposed rezone of the isthmus. Among the crowd was newly re-elected Senator Karen Fraser. Sponsored by the Friends of the Waterfront, 20/20 Vision Olympia, the Capitol Park Foundation, and the League of Women Voters, the forum featured a number of speakers, who addressed topics ranging from the status of the citizen initiative, to the impact of the rezone on the proposed Heritage Center on the Capitol Campus, to the possible course of litigation should the rezone be approved by the Olympia City Council.

"The bottom of the third"

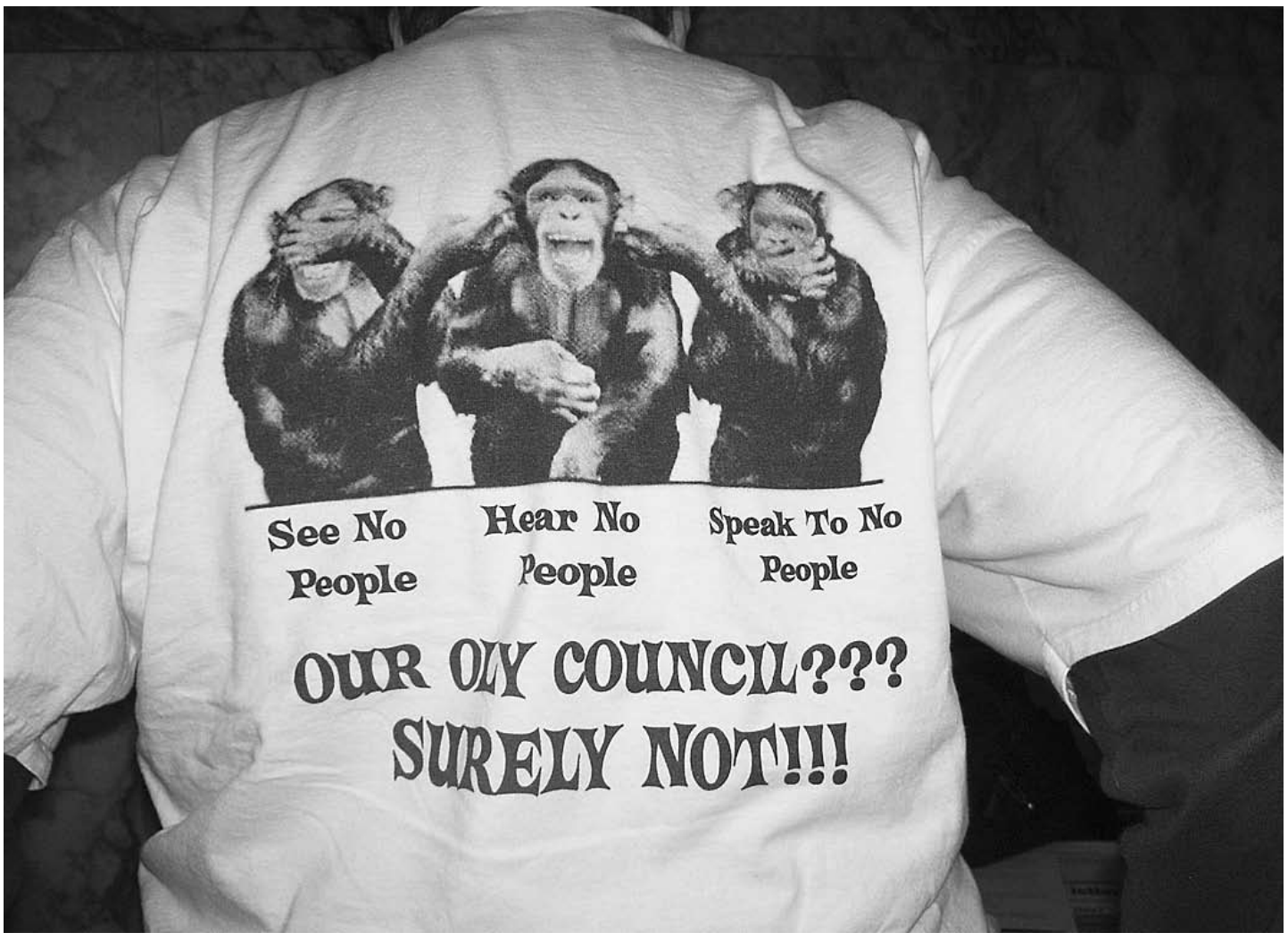
"This issue is in the bottom of the third inning," said Jerry Reilly, Chair of the Capitol Park Foundation, when he spoke at the citizens forum. "It has a long, long way to go." Former Olympia Mayor and Friends of the Waterfront founding member Bob Jacobs outlined the steps required to rezone the isthmus: A Comprehensive Plan Amendment, a height amendment, and an amendment to the Shoreline Master program. Thad Curtz gave a brief overview of what threatens to be a very long process of litigation, which may ultimately involve the Department of Ecology, the Growth Management Hearings Board, the Court of Appeals, the State Supreme Court, and the Shoreline Hearings Board. "Should this whole scenario play out," says Curtz, "it would be four to six years before anything could be built on the isthmus." And that's if all rulings are in favor of the developer.

Pro bono legal representation

Both the Friends of the Waterfront and the Capitol Park Foundation have formed legal committees which are planning to fight the rezone legally if the city council adopts the proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment Ordinance, which it will most likely do at the December 16 council meeting. The two groups and their legal committees are working together amicably, as they have to date, although they may approach similar legal problems from slightly different angles. Both groups have attorneys and legal researchers working pro bono, yet Curtz acknowledged that there will most likely be legal costs that will need to be covered by fundraising—that the groups fighting to preserve the isthmus will most likely have to appeal to concerned members of the public for funds to legally block this unpopular project. He observed wryly that Olympia taxpayers will be picking up the tab for the city's legal costs as well. Some audience members expressed frustration that they will be paying for both sides of a legal battle to fight something that the majority of the public has clearly expressed they do not want.

Many of the people at the forum also voiced discontent with the unwillingness of the city council to respond, or even listen to them. Apparently, email messages which had the word "isthmus" in the subject line were returned unread. The public comment period was closed, and the feelings of the public are being treated as an unnecessary nuisance.

▸ **ISTHMUS** continues on page 6



FASHION STATEMENT: Feeling unheard by the City Council, a citizen resorts to wearing her opinion on her t-shirt. (Photo by Janet Blanding)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions
Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail.com* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool
The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement
"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Colby Batts, Janet Blanding, Dave Campbell, Marylea Coday, Mike Coday, Renee Cruickshank, Wally Cuddeford, Christian DesMarets, Teresa Jennings, Robert Larson, Sandy Mayes, Patty Mosqueda, Phan Nguyen, hali panneton, Sandia Slaby, Sylvia Smith, Jeff Sowers, Pat Tassoni, Scott Yoos

Anti-Discrimination Clause
We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues
Some back issues are available in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

But we think that the most likely reason of all
May have been that their hearts were too sizes too small.

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
Dec. 26

WIP Advertising
(360) 956-1136

7.25" x 4.75"	$125
4.75" x 4.75"	$83
3.0" x 4.75"	$52
4.0" x 2.25"	$34
3.5" x 2.25"	$30
2.25" x 2.25"	$20

4 Months for the price of 3

Special Non-Profit Rates

PO Box 295 • Olympia WA 98507
submissions@olywip.org • www.olywip.org

Only You Can Keep
Works in Progress Going
for another 18 Years

Subscriptions: o Individual – $35

o Low-Income – $15

o Please do not mail, I'll pick it up!

Support Progressive Journalism
If the corporations aren't paying for it, then you have to!

Name

Address

City State Zip

Send to: Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507

ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

26 prosecuted for non-violent womens' solidarity action: Legal defense funds urgently needed to ensure access to legal support!

All amounts are extremely helpful. Donations should be made out to "Port of Olympia Legal Defense Fund" and mailed to: Legal Defense Fund, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507—0295, or via the web: http://www.olypmr.org/donate.html

Donations can also be deposited directly into the Port of Olympia Legal Defense Fund account by visiting the Thurston Union for Low Income People (TULIP) Cooperative Credit Union branch located inside the Olympia Food Co-op Eastside Store, 3111 Pacific Avenue.

Note: The Port of Olympia Legal Defense Fund was incorporated as a non-profit organization with the Secretary of State of the State of Washington.. The Port of Olympia Legal Defense Fund's UBI number is: 602-619-196. Unfortunately donations for the purpose of legal defense are not tax-deductible in the US.

The Freeschool is looking for partner organizations to share space in Olympia

The Freeschool is considering working with several other organizations and sharing the cost of a house, or transforming a downtown warehouse into a shared space (as was successfully accomplished by the Rhizome Collective http://www.rhizomecollective.org). If we receive enough interest, we will begin holding public forums in January 2008.

The Rhizome Collective operates out of three warehouses on Allen Street in East Austin. These warehouses and the 1/3 acre on which they sit make up the Rhizosphere. In addition to housing the collective, the Rhizosphere is used as a space for the development of urban sustainability practices. The Rhizosphere hosts space for organizations such as Austin Indymedia, the Austin Zine Library, the Inside Books Project, which ships reading material to prison inmates, Bikes Across Borders, and Food Not Bombs.

If you are interested please send us an email by visiting the Freeschool Community's website at www.Freeschoolunity.org and click on 'contact.' Thank you. You can also call us from 11am-11pm, 7 days a week at (360) 539-8008 and we would love to talk with you.

Secret cafe to benefit low income Evergreen students traveling to Venezuela to build international solidarity.

Saturday, Dec. 6, 5:30-9:30 pm
Sage's Brunch House (on Rogers, right next to the Westside Co-op)

Hand crafted cuisines by The Brothers Ryan Browne and Dan Bolduc. Various mouth watering entrées, ranging from $8 to $15. Beer $3, Wine $5. With live music from Southern Skies (folk), the Erev Ravs (klezmer), and others. Great Food!! Great Music!! Fun and educational.

POWER Tampon Action

Tuesday, December 9, 10 a.m. lobby restroom of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Community Services Office (CSO), at 6737 Capitol Boulevard South, in Tumwater.

Members of POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights), an Olympia based welfare rights organization, will put free, donated tampons and menstrual pads in the women's bathroom at the welfare office lobby to bring it up to the same standard of other Washington state governmental buildings. POWER members and volunteers have noticed that free tampons and pads are available in most of the state offices they visited on the capitol campus and beyond, and for twenty-five cents at local state colleges; however there is nothing available in the bathroom the state provides to women who receive services from DSHS. "The fact that there is not even a quarter machine in the welfare office bathroom speaks to inequity so often faced by the low-income members of our state," said Lindsay Day, POWER intern. "In this case, it appears that the cost of poverty for low income women is both their dignity and health."

Oly Economic Revival at Fertile Ground

Economic revival potlucks will be held the first 3 Tuesday evenings in December (2nd, 9th and 16th) at Fertile Ground (311 9th Ave SE) to generate ideas for how the community can band together during these tough economic times. Also a new yahoo group called Oly Economic Revival is open to anyone who wants to join.

Community Currency called Life Dollars can be part of your economic tool kit. Systems like Life Dollars are already in place and functioning throughout America and the rest of the world. http://fourthcornerexchange.com

Life Dollars began in Bellingham in 2002 and has over 700 members around the state of Washington. There's no script to carry, just a debit/credit database online where buyers and sellers record their exchanges. There's an added bonus for those who still have their old Sound Hours in their drawer. The exchange rate is one Sound Hour per one Life Dollar. Just mail them in with your membership form.

More info: Gail Di Marzo 360 352-2428

New Orleans activist Malik Rahim speaking in Olympia

Wednesday, December 10, 7 p.m., Traditions, 5th and Water Streets, Olympia

Community organizer, former Black Panther and longtime housing and prison activist Malik Rahim will be speaking in Olympia on Wednesday evening, December 10th, 7 PM at Traditions (5th and Water).

Malik Rahim was raised in New Orleans' Algiers neighborhood; he founded and operated the Algiers Development Center and Invest Transitional Housing. He is co-founder and outreach organizer of "Housing is a Human Right" in San Francisco, California and co-founded Common Ground Relief in September 2005. Mailik was awarded the Thomas Merton Award for 2008. alik Rahim's visit to Olympia will come just days after results from his run for a Louisiana congressional seat in the House (on the Green Party ticket) are known.

This is a free event, though donations will be accepted at the door. Sponsored by OMJP, BRICK and Media Island International.

Documentary Film: *Rebuilding Hope*

Wednesday, December 10, at 7 PM, at The Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St. NW.

In 2007, author and filmmaker Jen Marlowe accompanied three young men on their return to Sudan to find surviving family-members. Marlowe will present her work-in-progress documentary film about this journey, *Rebuilding Hope* at a pre-screening/fundraiser sponsored by the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice, which will include Q&A with the filmmaker.

Rebuilding Hope features Gabriel Bol Deng, Koor Garang and Garang Mayuol who as young children were forced to flee South Sudan in 1987 when militiamen led violent attacks on their villages. Crossing the country on foot, they reached safety in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya and in 2001 came to the US as part of a large group of Southern Sudanese young men nicknamed "Lost Boys."

Proceeds from the evening will support completion of the film. Proceeds from the completed project will go to healthcare and education projects in Sudan initiated by the three young men featured in the film. For further information, contact Jen Marlowe: *jenmarlowe@hotmail.com*, (202) 375-3492.

March for Justice for Jose Ramírez-Jiménez

Saturday, Dec. 13, 1 pm, beginning at the location of his killing, at the corner of 26th Ave & College St, Lacey. More info: *tecsmecha@yahoo.com*

See the following page for related story.

Picket the Post Office

Monday, January 12, 11 am to 1 pm, Downtown Post Office, 900 Jefferson Street, Olympia

The Olympia Local of the American Postal Workers Union will be holding an informational picket to call for the Postal Service to bring fired Union President Clint Burelson back to work and to bring the outgoing mail operations back to Olympia. The community is invited to join us in our efforts.

Fundraiser for Coffee Strong with Jim Page, folksinger, commentator

Saturday, January 10, 8 p.m., Coffee Strong, 15109 Union SW, Tillicum

Tacoma (between I-5 exits 122-123 in Subway Bldg

Coffee Strong is currently only the second GI Rights Coffeehouse in the United States. This was put together by Veterans Against the Iraq War. Located near the gate to Ft Lewis, it gives current and veteran GIs a place to get information on their rights, resisting deployment, working with Gay Rights in the Military, resources, medical and mental health issues. More info on the work is at GIVoice.org.

Jim Page has long been a Northwest favorite as he skewers with wit and precision assumptions, sheds light on injustice, and uses word plus song to call to action. He has been a longtime advocate of a peace strategy and against the wars in Vietnam and the two Iraq Wars. Page's calls to action are heard in concerts around the world.

Tickets $15: GIs Free 253-581-1565 or Chris Lunn 253-863-6617

ARTIST & Ancient Victorys info: Chris Lunn, Ancient Victorys, POB 7515, Bonney Lake, WA 98391 253-863-6617 ChrisLunn @ Comcast.net, Coffee Ground & GI Rights info 253-581-1565

Protesting the murder of Jose Ramírez-Jiménez

by James Pellegrino

On November 19 a popular assembly organized at the corner of Water Street and Fourth Avenue in downtown Olympia. The group held signs reading "No Police Brutality" and marched towards the Olympia Police Department headquarters. Gathering in support of the family of Jose Ramírez-Jiménez, a local resident, who was shot and killed by the OPD on the night of November 15, the group paraded in a heavy rain.

Solemnly the crowd chanted, "No justice no peace, no killer police." Some of those involved in the march passed out handbills describing the circumstance around Jose's death, others talked amongst themselves, but many walked in silence.

Upon arriving at the OPD headquarters, the group gathered outside of the adjoining city council steps. Miguel Rodriguez of MEChA (*Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán*, or Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán) thanked everyone for their participation in the march and explained the circumstance behind Jose's death.

"As far as what the media has released, he was a suspect and the police attempted to stop Jose while driving. After his car was stopped, his girlfriend was removed from the car. It was not clear how he was killed or if he was killed inside of the car." Rodriguez added, "The reason why we are out here today is to build community awareness around the death of Jose Ramírez-Jiménez. We feel that if there is an investigation by Thurston County, then Jose won't receive justice. So we are calling for an independent investigation to be conducted outside of the police force."

> "We feel that if there is an investigation by Thurston County, then Jose won't receive justice. So we are calling for an independent investigation to be conducted outside of the police force."

Miguel thanked everyone for participating in the assembly and encouraged the group to attend the city council meeting set for the following Tuesday. A candle was lit in memory of Jose, and the crowd chanted "Ain't no power like the power of the people" before dispersing.

On that Tuesday, November 25, many people from the original assembly, as well as others who had heard of the death of Jose, attended the city council meeting. Two attendees, Filemón Bohmer-Tapia and Brendan Dunn, testified before the council. They called upon the council to authorize an independent investigation into Jose's death. "We will be watching closely," stated Bohmer-Tapia, "and we will demand justice."

It is likely that those concerned about the death of Jose will have a long battle with the city council. None of the elected members spoke about the incident aside from Mayor Mah, who asked the police chief how the investigation will take place.

The investigation will be conducted by the Lacey Police Department. After the investigation is completed by the LPD, the police auditor will review the case to ensure that the investigation was conducted in full. The police auditor will be contracted from outside of the Olympia community. These procedures did little to satisfy those in attendance at the meeting.

When asked how he felt about the meeting, Bohmer-Tapia responded that those in Olympia concerned about the shooting of Jose should continue to attend the weekly city council meetings when possible. "We have to help ourselves and our community, and we cannot rely on the police or the city council to handle this situation," said Bohmer-Tapia, "We'll just have to keep putting pressure on the city council."

Jose Guadalupe Ramírez-Jiménez (6/6/84–11/15/2008) leaves behind an 8-year-old son.

A march for Justice for Jose will be held on Sat., Dec. 13, at 1 pm, starting on 26th & College St in Lacey, where Jose was killed. If you would like more information about the effort to secure Justice for Jose, please contact MEChA at tescmecha@yahoo.com.

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continued from page 1

bury: "This is terrorism, and frankly, I will press charges to the highest extreme that the law allows."

Kingsbury also reported that the Capitol Playhouse locks had been filled with glue. As well, Councilmember Joe Hyer's business was vandalized, but neither of these actions were mentioned by NAG.

Another message, this time credited to "Friends of NAG," was widely posted on the internet in Oct, targeting both Kingsbury and the *Olympian*. The "communiqué" praised the vandalism on the Capitol Playhouse and claimed credit for an incident on Oct 6 in which the tires of four *Olympian* vans were slashed. Again, the piece was an ad hominem rant which included this comment: "Jeff Kingsbury is a successful queer politician. But he is also a traitor and a despicable human being."

In the Nov. 21 article, the *Olympian* quoted Kingsbury in reference to the postcard and other anonymous actions: "This is clearly an attempt to intimidate....I refuse to be part of a culture of fear. I will not do it....This is absolutely emotional terrorism."

Creating a culture of fear: Either you're with us, or you're with the terrorists

The postcard stunt met with swift, nearly universal condemnation throughout the community, on local blogs and elsewhere. On OlyBlog, for instance, people who have differed strongly with Kingsbury for his policies and behaviors on the City Council, castigated the perpetrator and rallied around Kingsbury with expressions of support.

Yet, in an editorial on Nov 25, the *Olympian* editors assume a tone of righteous indignation which seems to imply otherwise: "We as a community must stand up to this hate speech....If not, if this community doesn't stand up and say this type of behavior won't be tolerated, then we are on a downward spiral that is deplorable....It's time for this community to stand up."

And although the postcard and acts of vandalism against Kingsbury and Hyer, were isolated acts, any of which could easily have been perpetrated by very few, or even one lone individual, the editorial seems to cast a much wider net in implicating views and behaviors worthy of the community's condemnation: "If the incendiary postcard was an isolated incident, that would be one thing. But the sad truth is in recent months we've seen an escalation of the personal attacks against members of the Olympia City Council....Councilwoman Rhenda Strub said she and other council members have faced 'constant abuse and bullying,' some of it from individuals once considered friends."

The Nov. 21 article summarizes Kingsbury's speculations about who may have sent the postcard and why: "He said he has been targeted because he has taken a stand on controversial issues—supporting approval of a stricter noise ordinance, repeal of the city's Nuclear Free Zone Ordinance and passage of an ordinance restricting camping in recreational vehicles on city streets.

"Kingsbury also made the motion for the council to prepare legislation to raise building-height limits in an area between Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake, paving the way for proposed five and seven-story mixed-use condominium buildings. That proposal has drawn strong opposition from *a few hundred residents*, including some who have been vehement in their opposition." (Emphasis added.)

When I wrote to the author of the article, questioning the reference to "a few hundred residents" who opposed the condo project—when in fact over 5,000 people in a little over one month signed a petition supporting a park instead—he replied that "the passage you question [I sent the entire paragraph] ...was added to the story during the editing process. I will pass along your concern to my editor."

In other words, the editor added text which specifically implicated people working to oppose the isthmus rezone, and which contained blatant disinformation, concealing what is clearly a groundswell of opposition to the rezone.

The "controversial issues" cited by Kingsbury are examples of other unpopular actions taken by the Council after numerous proddings and editorializing from the *Olympian*. What now distinguishes the rezone controversy from those other unpopular positions, is that those changes have already been passed into law by the Council. Since the expected final vote on the isthmus rezone is still pending (Dec 16), there remains particular value for the *Olympian* editors (and rezone proponents on the City Council) in misrepresenting the facts related to the issue and marginalizing those who oppose it, a tactic they've employed with numerous other "controversial issues" over the years.

Conditional treatment of principles and politicians

In the Nov 25 editorial, the *Olympian* editors challenge Kingsbury's critics to "have the courage of their convictions and publicly argue for their cause with facts or logic." This implies commitment to a journalist code which the editorial board itself only applies conditionally, depending on the issues or the politicians in question.

> While the Olympian appears to have gone out of its way to disparage TJ Johnson, they have allowed Jeff Kingsbury to spin certain events to his own advantage.

The isthmus rezone: Since, for instance, facts and logic inconveniently contradict the paper's position on the isthmus rezone, the editorial board resorts to obfuscation and disinformation to argue its case. Try to find fact or logic cited anywhere in the Nov 18 pro-rezone editorial, defending the City Council's decision to move forward with finalizing the isthmus rezone in advance of the mandated park feasibility study. A preemptive vote to rezone the isthmus would sabotage the feasibility of a park by increasing the value of the property, thus subverting a good-faith democratic process, guaranteeing a well-grounded litigation against the City. The only "rationale" offered by the *Olympian* editors as to why such an irresponsible maneuver by the Council should occur is that, 1) the councilmembers "want to" do it, and 2) "this is not a perfect world." They don't even bother with the pretense of fact or logic.

Then consider the unabashed mendacity of this statement: "Critics, primarily focused on the *mistaken notion that the development will block views*, have rallied against the proposed development." (Emphasis added. No rebuttal necessary.)

TJ Johnson: In addition to creating confusion around the facts of an issue, the *Olympian* will vary its treatment of politicians depending on how their policies line up with the *Olympian*'s views. When politicians fall in line with the *Olympian*'s agenda, public criticism of that person is deflected and the community is rallied around them when they are attacked. Conversely, politicians who oppose the *Olympian*'s positions must be destroyed through any means necessary; personal attacks are routinely employed. Questioning a disfavored politician's character and motives, and misrepresenting his or her words and deeds, are tactics commonly used by the *Olympian*.

On Nov. 25, the *Olympian* editors stated: "No council member, no public servant, should be subjected to personal attack, vandalism or hate speech. ...It's time to end the hate speech and personal attacks

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continues on page 5

SOUTH SOUND
GREEN PAGES
"a bi-monthly journal of environmental news and commentary..."
PO Box 1989
Olympia, WA 98507
(360) 528-9158
Check out our new website!
speech.greenpages@gmail.com
www.oly-wa.us/greenpages/

Centralia Square
Antique Mall
Restaurant
3 Floors to Explore
Open 7 days 10-5
South on Interstate 5
Off at Exit 82 (Factory Outlets)
East on Harrison, Right on Pearl
201 S. Pearl (& Locust)
facing Washington Park
www.MyAntiqueMall.com

Is this really the end of the Artesian Well?

by Janet Blanding

On November 5, Jim Ingersoll of the Friends of the Artesians (FOA) wrote a letter to Olympia Mayor Doug Mah and the City Council, announcing that the group would be disbanding, abandoning its dream of creating a park where a permanent, publicly owned well would be available for community use (*The letter appears following this article*). After years of frustration, with repeated failed attempts to broker an agreement between the FOA, the Port of Olympia, and the City of Olympia, it seems unlikely that such a dream will ever be realized.

Worse yet, the well in the Diamond Parking lot on 4th Avenue (near the former Manium) will most likely be closed very soon. According to the letter, "The Department of Health has continued to issue an annual permit for the operation of that well only on the condition that we were making such progress [toward establishing a publicly owned well] and on the condition that Friends of Artesians pay for monthly testing of the water from the 4th Avenue well." With the FOA disbanding, it is unlikely that the Department of Health will allow the 4th Avenue well to remain accessible to the public, once monthly testing is discontinued in February, 2009. According to Ingersoll, "The implications are catastrophic for the well."

There are many Artesian wells in the Olympia area, but most of them are capped, with the water being redirected into the sewer instead of flowing freely above the ground. The only well which is easily accessible to the public is the one in the Diamond Parking lot (although there is a smaller, slower flowing well in a parking lot at the corner of Olympia Avenue and Washington street which can currently be used by the public, and one in an alley near Orca Books).

Well users have reacted to the news of the well's imminent demise with grief and anger. Quite a few Olympians had not heard about the problems with keeping the well open and found it hard to believe that the continued existence of this much-loved local institution was threatened. Many people reacted with shock when confronted with the likely demise of the Artesian well. "What!!?? Demise?" reacted Brooks Martin in response to the news. "Is this true?" asked Gautum Dutta. "Please say no!" One well user said "I don't know how you'd turn off an Artesian well."

Sadly, it is easy to cap an artesian well, and the city has done it many times; in 1940, there were 96 artesian wells in Olympia. Now, only a few of them remain free-flowing.

On a recent Sunday afternoon at the well, ten people used the well within ten minutes. Drew Freeman, after bending over to drink directly from the stream of water splashing out of the pipe, said "The well seems like the center point of the whole town. It brings people together because everybody meets out here." Robert Larson filled up a five gallon jug, and remarked "It's a shame that the Department of Health will have to close a place where people can get water from a natural source. People want to feel that they're part of the natural environment. Closing it down pushes all those people that much further away from the natural world." Ida Severson and her son Abel were making their first visit ever to the Artesian well. "We were told we wouldn't leave Oly if we drank the water," said Ida. "So we waited until we were sure we wanted to stay. We're here for our ritual drink from the well." Meesh Miller and Jim Hill were at the well to fill jugs, and were unhappy to hear that the well would most likely be capped in the near future. "It would be really great if the city could find a permanent place for an Artesian well," said Hill.

In a phone interview, Jim Ingersoll explained that the Friends of the Artesians (FOA) had tried for fifteen years to reach a solution with the city to ensure public access to the pure, delicious water which constitutes an important aspect of Olympia's civic identity. Unfortunately, the FOA have found that the city's fears of liability have stymied all their plans. "It would take an ounce of courage on the city's part," says Ingersoll. "But they won't talk about it. They've closed off the conversation." As he explained in his letter, "We face a catch-22: We are required to have an agreement between the Port and the City in order to get a permit to drill a test well on the Port site. But the City has told us that you will not sign any agreement until the well has been drilled, tested, approved, and paid for."

The FOA has taken responsibility for monthly testing of the water, at a cost of $55–60 a month, for many years. It is possible that if some community members formed a limited liability corporation and continued to test the well, the Department of Health might allow the well in the Diamond parking lot to remain open. According to Ingersoll, "The Department of Health is aware of how important this is to people." It is the City of Olympia that is retreating, refusing to acknowledge the importance of access to the aquifer and the pristine water which gives Olympia its unofficial city motto, "It's the water." Ingersoll predicts that if the well is closed and the public loses access to it, "We lose all access to our natural heritage. People will be more depressed, more cynical, less welling to participate in government, and more isolated." He also anticipates a continuing loss of faith in civic government. "Government will have more of a bunker mentality," says Ingersoll. "They will have more trouble building a legacy of trusting."

The well is an important part of Olympia's natural and cultural heritage. It is deeply meaningful to the citizens of our city. What does it say about our city officials' sense of accountability that they willfully stifle the attempts of hard-working citizens to keep the well accessible to all, just shrug, and let it die?

Sadly, it is easy to cap an artesian well, and the city has done it many times; in 1940, there were 96 artesian wells in Olympia. Now, only a few of them remain free-flowing.

NOV. 5 LETTER FROM JIM INGERSOLL OF FRIENDS OF ARTESIANS:

November 5, 2008

Dear Mayor Mah and Council Members:

Fifteen years ago, Friends of Artesians was formed to create a permanent, publicly owned artesian well in Olympia. For all these years, we have worked steadfastly to achieve this goal.

When we couldn't get an agreement between Diamond Parking and the City to make the well in the 4th Avenue parking lot a public facility, we turned towards the possibility of drilling a new well on Port property near the Farmers' Market. For the last several years, we thought we were making progress.

That progress has been crucial to our ability to keep the well on 4th Avenue available to the public. The Department of Health has continued to issue an annual permit for the operation of that well *only* on the condition that we were making such progress, and on the condition that Friends of Artesians pay for monthly testing of the water from the 4th Avenue well.

Today, however, we find ourselves in an untenable position. After many years of trying to broker an agreement between Friends, the Port, and the City, we face a catch-22: We are required to have an agreement between the Port and the City in order to get a permit to drill a test well on the Port site. But the City has told us that you will not sign any agreement until the well has been drilled, tested, approved, and paid for.

There is another problem as well. Friends of Artesians had offered to drill and test the well, raise enough money for an endowment that would cover ongoing maintenance costs, and to turn over ownership to the City. Today, because of the economic downturn, a generous local well driller has been forced to rescind his offer to drill the well for free. In addition, we know that in times like these, charitable giving is more likely to be directed to meeting basic needs than to a project like this. So we are no longer confident that we could raise the funds necessary to endow a maintenance fund.

A third obstacle is the shifting sand of City decision-making. Over many years, we have worked with city staff in good faith. At times, we've felt caught in an endless loop of planning with no real support, and

The legendary Artesian well, pictured here serving patrons, has prevented many hapless drinkers from leaving Olympia. Soon it might just be another parking lot. (Photo by Janet Blanding)

no leader willing to step forward and solve problems. We have also received mixed messages about the City's willingness to own the well. Fears about liability linger, even though we have responded to repeated requests to provide information about other cities that own and manage similar public wells.

Because of all these obstacles, Friends of Artesians has decided to disband. We've concluded that, in spite of our continuing belief in the worthiness of this project, we are not in a position to bring it to fruition. Our existence provides the illusion of progress—but that illusion has become an obstacle to progress.

We know that hundreds of people draw water from the well on 4th Avenue every day. They come from all over Thurston County and beyond. In late summer, when local wells go dry, some people depend on the well for water for their families and their livestock. Many well users believe the water is beneficial to their health.

We also know that artesian water has long been a part of Olympia's unique history and civic identity. Our tests found that the pure water that erupts from that beat-up pipe in the 4th Avenue parking lot actually fell as rain in nearby foothills over 2,000 years ago. It is a powerful link to a pristine Earth, and an invitation for all of us to connect with and learn about the natural world that sustains us.

We hope that the demise of Friends of Artesians will give rise to an upwelling of public concern and support for the City to act, either in concert with the Port or on its own. The City's leadership will be needed promptly, because Friends of Artesians will no longer be present to hold the permit for the 4th Avenue well, or to conduct the monthly testing required by the Department of Health. We will continue to pay for testing through February, 2009, to give the City or another entity time to make a decision about taking on this responsibility.

We have not made the decision to disband without grief and sadness. We all still share the same vision we began with 15 years ago, and we still hold out hope that it can be realized. But we've concluded that the City itself must take leadership to make it happen. We fervently hope that you will.

Sincerely,
Jim Ingersoll

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continued from page 3

on public servants." Yet, outrage from the *Olympian* regarding personal attack and hate speech against councilmembers, is selectively applied.

Former Councilmember TJ Johnson is a perfect case in point. I asked Johnson to comment on the editorial about the attacks on Jeff Kingsbury. He told me about a communication he had with Editorial Page Editor, Mike Oakland, and then–Executive Editor Vicky Kilgore after receiving numerous threats by phone and e-mail at his home during his time on the Council. One caller told Johnson that he had a .30-06 gun and knew where he lived and where his child went to school. Johnson reported these threats to Olympia police, and contacted Oakland and Kilgore to express concern that such threats against him were commonplace on the *Olympian* website comment forum.

According to Johnson, the *Olympian* managers told him that essentially there was nothing much they could do about it. The online attacks were expressions of "free speech" and were a "reflection of the community's feelings." Although the threats were reported to the police, and were well-known to the public since Johnson had discussed it at Council meetings, at no point did the *Olympian* publish an editorial expressing outrage at the threats. Nor did they ever explicitly admonish comment forum participants for making similar threats and other personal attacks against Councilmember Johnson. And they certainly did not attempt to discredit Johnson's opponents through implied association with such threats.

TJ Johnson, both in his personal life and in his former role on the City Council, is the very embodiment of what it means to have the courage of one's convictions: speaking out and taking action on evidence-based principles. Possibly for that very reason, his positions on the issues have often stood in direct contrast to those taken by the *Olympian* editorial board. The following are a few examples:

In May, 2004, along with many individuals and peace groups opposed to nuclear weapons, Johnson opposed a visit to our city from the USS Olympia, a nuclear powered, nuclear armed submarine. The visit was essentially a military PR and recruitment stunt.

In Jan, 2005, Johnson voiced his objection to the fact that the Port of Olympia did not make known to the public, thereby foregoing opportunity for public input, a decision to make preparations for resuming military contracts after 17 years.

In Aug, 2005, the Olympia City Council passed a Nuclear Free Zone Ordinance proposed by Johnson. He had been instrumental in organizing and rallying the community in support of the ordinance.

(The ordinance was repealed by the current City Council on Sept. 8 this year, largely at the behest of the *Olympian*. As reported in the *Sitting Duck*: "About 130 cities in the country have passed various nuclear free initiatives; Olympia is the first to have repealed one.")

The *Olympian* claimed on Nov. 25 to embrace the kind of principled courage of evidence-based conviction personified in Johnson. But in direct contradiction to that, and contrary to their professed disdain for personal attacks on public servants, Johnson has been a frequent target of personal attacks in *Olympian* editorials. Here are a few excerpts:

> "His characterization of the ship as a 'killing machine' naturally provoked an angry and heated response—including irate calls to his home. What did Johnson expect when he used such an explosive phrase?"
> —*The Olympian on TJ Johnson*

5/27/04: "They unnecessarily snubbed the USS Olympia and its crew and in the process slapped every military man and woman—active and retired—across the face.

"Olympia Councilman TJ Johnson's resolution to oppose a visit from the USS Olympia was mean-spirited and just plain rude. His characterization of the ship as a 'killing machine' naturally provoked an angry and heated response—including irate calls to his home. What did Johnson expect when he used such an explosive phrase? ...There is no room to rebuke the men and women fighting to preserve freedom and democracy."

1/30/05: "... Councilman Johnson is sticking his nose where it does not belong."

8/28/05: "Olympia is now a nuclear-free zone. Big deal! When will the Olympia City Council stop wasting its time and the public's money on meaningless, unenforceable ordinances that have little direct impact on the lives of community residents?

"Oh, sure, Councilman TJ Johnson will tell you how he attended a national conference this year and returned all inspired about a few cities across the country that have adopted nuclear-free ordinances, how national movements grow from grassroots efforts and how each of us as a global citizen must work for peace and justice and on and on and on."

> "lol *[laughing out loud]*...you should hear these folks, I can look directly at them and type at the same time!"
> —*Olympia City Councilmember Jeff Kingsbury on Facebook during the public communications period*

Jeff Kingsbury: While the *Olympian* appears to have gone out of its way to disparage TJ Johnson, they have allowed Jeff Kingsbury to spin certain events to his own advantage. The postcard which was falsely mailed in Kingsbury's name included this statement: "Lately there has been a bit of an uproar about me calling people 'idiots', what's the big deal, most people are, I am just the guy that's man enough to say it."

The passage references the following Facebook conversation Kingsbury participated in during the public comments period of a City Council meeting on Nov. 3:

Jeff, 7:13 pm: "Jeff is listening to an idiot at the moment." (A "status update.")

Eric, 7:23 pm: "who's the idiot?"

Jeff, 7:30 pm: "A citizen who doesn't like our policy. I'm in Council."

Megan, 7:36 pm: "Facebook in Council ...nice!"

Jeff, 7:37 pm: "lol...you should hear these folks, I can look directly at them and type at the same time!"

The conversation got posted on Olyblog, triggering an article in the *Olympian*. On Nov 5, Kingsbury told the *Olympian* that the "idiot" he referred to was Jim Reeve (aka "Moses") who made a racist remark about Barack Obama. The *Olympian* did not press him to explain the "folks" he referred to in the comment made later.

The *Olympian* also reported that Kingsbury, "... acknowledged that he sometimes uses Facebook in council meetings, 'maybe a total of a minute.'" They did not include the time-log of the Facebook comments, nor did they point out an apparent contradiction to Kingsbury's "one-minute" claim: the conversation in question began with Kingsbury's post at 7:13 pm, and his last comment was at 7:37 pm, 24 minutes later.

The *Olympian* repeated Kingsbury's abbreviated, less than forthcoming, version of the Facebook incident in the Nov 21 report about the postcard: it was merely an ill-mannered assertion of disapproval of someone making racist remarks.

Aside from the inappropriateness of a councilmember using Facebook to ridicule speakers during a Council meeting, the point to consider here is how differently the story might have been treated had the councilmember in question not been one so highly favored by the *Olympian* editors.

The Council's chilling effect on public participation

In reference to the attacks on Kingsbury, the *Olympian* reported that Mayor Doug Mah "said if these attacks escalate, they will have a chilling effect on public participation." That may be, but if Mah and other councilmembers are concerned about public participation, they have a funny way of showing it.

In July, the Council changed the protocol regarding public comment by prohibiting any comment on an item for 180 days *prior* to a public hearing on the item, in addition to the previous restriction only limiting comment for 180 days *following* a public hearing, for a total of six months during which public comment is prohibited on a given topic, except during a single public forum.

Because there was a public hearing on the isthmus rezone on Sept 16, public comment is currently closed to that issue. Which presents a dilemma for the many people wishing to call on the Council to postpone a vote on the rezone until the park feasibility study is completed. Although the study is still open for comment, it is difficult to speak of it in any meaningful way without referencing the rezone.

Bonnie Jacobs, of Friends of the Waterfront, found a way. At the City Council meeting on Nov 25, with an overflow crowd of supporters in attendance, she limited her 3 minutes of comment to simply listing many of the wonderful ideas coming out of a recent Citizen Action Forum to save the isthmus, where 170 people shared their ideas for better uses of the isthmus than condos.

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continued from page 11

STYLING · CUTS · COLOR · PERMS
DEEP CONDITIONING · MANICURES · PEDICURES · MASSAGE · ASTROLOGY · TAROT
FREE CONSULTATIONS · FREE BANG TRIMS

"We'll trim it, rub it, or read it"
JAMIE LEE & COMPANY
309 E. 4TH AVE.
OLYMPIA, WA 98501
360-786-6027
JAMIELEEANDCOMPANY.COM
KAOS patron business.
BOTANICAL HAIR CARE PRODUCTS

Furniture Works
Affordable Home Comforts
Gently Used - Consignments - New in an eclectic mix of home furnishings and art
402 Washington St. NE
Olympia 360-570-0165
www.olyfurnitureworks.com
Tues-Fri 12:30-6 Sat 10-6 Sun 10-4

ACUPUNCTURE
Ken Smith, L.Ac.
360.923.0826
http://kenrsmith.blogspot.com/

▸ **ISTHMUS** continues from page 1

"A View for All"

The forum concluded with the debut of "A View for All," a song written by local resident and rezone opponent Jane Canfield. Canfield, who is now a second grade teacher, was formerly a professional songwriter in Nashville. In a phone interview she explained that nowadays, instead of writing for a commercial market, her songs reflect her emotional responses to events. Because she enjoys walking the serpentine switchback trail down the hillside near Capitol Lake, Canfield is dismayed that the beautiful views there are threatened, that the open space there will be ruined by massive "Walmart sized condos down there, block to block."

Standing room only—again

On Nov. 25, the Olympia City Council was to begin deliberations on the rezone. To the dismay of the standing room only crowd who gathered to witness the discussion, the council treated the rezone as a foregone conclusion, and the only deliberations involved details of its enactment. As Jerry Reilly of the Capitol Park Foundation put it, "The 'deliberations' of the council were disappointing and frustrating. The only deliberations that took place were *how* to carry out this colossal mistake of a rezone, not *whether* it should be done at all." Members of the public watched helplessly as their elected representatives proceeded as if the public had overwhelmingly endorsed this project, rather than just the opposite. Councilmembers asked questions and proposed different strategies for enacting "view mitigations," that supposedly protect the views the large buildings will block, and voted to have a hearing review board oversee the project, rather than depending on a development agreement with Triway, as recommended by the Planning Commission. Councilmember Jeff Kingsbury preferred to leave the finer points in the hands of a review board, as he didn't want to "sweat the details," while councilmember Rhenda Strub, an engineer, wanted to "keep the details under this board's control as long as possible." Ultimately, Kingsbury prevailed, with the council voting five to two to let the finer points be resolved by a hearing examiner rather than an agreement. It should be noted that without a binding development agreement, the property will be easier to sell, which some people believe has been Triway's plan all along.

Apparently, the thousands of signatures on the citizen initiative and the hundreds of public communications addressed to the city council expressing opposition to this project resulted only in a few ridiculously paltry "mitigations" to ease the pain of the loss of cherished views. Councilmember Karen Messmer expressed some doubts that the proposed mitigations would do much to compensate, and the standing room audience at the council meeting overwhelmingly agreed. For instance, will the 100,000 yearly visitors to the Capitol Campus not mind that they can no longer see the Olympic mountains or Budd Bay if Larida Passage provides parking for the public—one stall per 10,000 square feet of building area? Will the people jogging around Capitol Lake fail to notice that the sunshine and views are blocked if the seven story buildings are set back at least eight feet from the sidewalk? Does a 400 square foot viewing platform somehow compensate for the loss of views everywhere else in the city?

A number of citizens pleaded with the council to at least delay passage of the amendment until after the park feasibility study had been completed. "Please slow down and wait for the study," implored Jane Canfield. Sandy Mayes commented that moving ahead with the rezone before completing the feasibility study was a mistake, since the predicted effect of the rezone would be to increase the value of the land and make it more difficult for the public to purchase; the premature rezone of the isthmus would "effectively sabotage the feasibility of a park." Mayes stated that the only way to proceed in good faith, would be for the council to complete the study before voting on the rezone. Walt Jorgensen expressed frustration with the seeming unwillingness of the council to take into account the will of the community, saying "When thousands of your constituents give voice to something, you need to give attention to it." Gretchen Christopher shared his sentiments, saying, "You're ignoring me, and hundreds if not thousands of other citizens." She went on to wonder why the council would move ahead against the will of the majority for the sake of a developer who does not have a good track record, and is currently embroiled in several lawsuits.

Trouble with Triway

A number of rezone proponents have rhapsodized over Tri Vo's being a local developer who is eager to move ahead with a local project. However, the city council seems to have taken little note of the many unhappy local residents with complaints about local problems created by Triway. [Editor's note: *Works in Progress* is in the process of acquiring public records and gathering information to provide more in-depth coverage of these complaints regarding Cooper Crest, Tumwater Hill, Nisqually Bend and Horizon Pointe in the January issue. Contact us at *olywip@gmail.com* if you have information to share about these or other projects.] It is interesting to note that while proponents of the Larida Passage project have often argued passionately that the high-density project is an environmentally responsible alternative to suburban sprawl, many of the complaints regarding Triway center around its irresponsibility when it comes to environmental stewardship. And most of Triway's projects represent the essence of "sprawl"—just ask the dead trees.

Cutting trees on the weekend without a permit, for no reason. Is this a good environmental record? (Photo by Janet Blanding)

Not far outside Olympia's city limits on the West Side, on a hillside overlooking Budd inlet, a moldering pile of dead alders in a vacant lot owned by Tri Vo tell a sad story. Almost five years ago, the lot was cleared of native vegetation, on a Sunday morning, without a permit, for no discernible purpose. Shawn Newman, who lives nearby and sometimes strolls by the still unused lot with his dog, describes what happened. Newman and other neighbors noticed several trucks going down the hill and a lot of noise and activity in the lot on a weekend morning. Newman "thought it was odd that this was happening on a weekend," so he moseyed down to the lot, and observed that trees were being cut. He looked around to see if there were permits posted, but none were evident. As it was a weekend, it was impossible to contact the county, but Newman called them Monday, by which time all the trees were lying dead on the ground, where they remain to this day. "I don't know for a fact if it was anything illegal," said Newman, "but I thought it was unusual. I thought it was odd."

A recent call to the Thurston County Permits Division revealed that the clearing of the lot was indeed done without a permit and that a stop work order was issued (after all the work had been done), but the matter has since been resolved to the County's satisfaction.

"Tri Vo has not lived up to development agreements"

Triway's failure to comply with permit requirements has also been a problem at the Cooper Crest subdivision. Many residents who have had problems with Triway Enterprises are wary of speaking out publicly against the company; many are homeowners who fear that problems which degrade the value of their property will not be remediated if they are too outspoken. One homeowner who has not hesitated to come forward is Karen Veldheer, who has repeatedly asked Triway and the City of Olympia to address various drainage and erosion problems at the Cooper Crest subdivision, where she purchased a house with the understanding that it was part of a "low impact" development. Veldheer explains that the land on which Cooper Crest is built is a wetland, designated as a critical area with special state and federal development regulations. The city allowed development of the land into buildable lots on the condition that it be done in a "low impact," environmentally responsible manner.

According to Veldheer, "Tri Vo has not lived up to the development agreements in Cooper Crest—and so far has gotten away with it." The City of Olympia has long been aware of a number of problems besetting Cooper Crest, as Veldheer and her neighbors have struggled for years to get the city to enforce Triway's permit requirements. Not until Veldheer and seven other Cooper Crest residents showed up and testified at a City Council meeting did the City finally threaten to collect over $1 million in bonds posted by Triway, which led to some planned remediations at Cooper Crest. In a letter to the City of Olympia dated October 10, 2008, Triway's attorney promises to remedy soil problems, improve stormwater controls, remove invasive vegetation, and replace dead trees, although several excuses are made for why most of these measures cannot be undertaken before Spring of 2009. Veldheer believes that many of the proposed remedies are inadequate, and "Triway is still trying to get out of their permit requirements."

A recent Sunday drive around the Cooper Crest subdivision revealed obvious erosion problems, several bare dirt front yards, a number of runoff ponds surrounded by inexpensive chain-link fencing and weeds, what appear to be sandbags made from garbage bags full of dirt, poorly positioned telephone and utility boxes in front yards and common areas, incomplete landscaping, and yards and yards of white PVC pipes lying on the surfaces of sloping hillsides. A row of houses on the downhill end of the slope were unoccupied, and many for-sale signs were in evidence throughout the development.

Making hay while the sun shines

Apparently sensing that local city governments are currently friendly to its interests, Triway has been moving ahead with a number of rezone applications, which is somewhat surprising given the gloomy economic outlook and the faltering housing market. Triway recently filed an application with the City of Olympia to raise height limits on West Bay at the site of the former Hardel mill, planning another mixed-use project which will include both upscale commercial space and high-end housing with waterfront views, very similar to the proposed Larida Passage. In addition, Triway is push-

Drainage problems at Cooper Crest (Photo by Janet Blanding)

Councilmember	Likely Vote on the Rezone	Triway Donation
Karen Messmer	No	$0
Joe Hyer	No	$0
Doug Mah	Yes	$1,200
Rhenda Strub	Yes	$250
Jeff Kingsbury	Yes	$1000 –$4999*
Joan Machlis	Yes	$0 (No campaign)
Craig Ottavelli	Yes	$0

*donation to Capital Playhouse

ing for an "upzone" in Tumwater, to the dismay of local residents, in order to build a similar mixed-use project dubbed Bellatorre. If height limits are overturned to make way for this project, it will block the views of Mt. Rainier currently enjoyed by some residents who live near the proposed project.

While most corporate giving has been impaired by the state of the economy, leaving many nonprofit and public benefit corporations hurting, Triway Enterprises seems to be an exception. Councilmember Kingsbury's employer, the Capital Playhouse, has been a recent beneficiary of Triway's largesse. Sharp-eyed theatergoers may have noticed that the donor list in the Playhouse's program has recently been expanded to include Triway Enterprises, listed as a contributor at the "Fanatic" level of $1000–$4,999. While the argument could be made that there's nothing unethical about supporting the arts, others note that accepting this donation creates a conflict of interest for Kingsbury. Cynics have noted that Triway's patronage of local drama began after the rezone application was submitted.

Frustration on both sides

Just as the majority of Olympians who oppose the isthmus are frustrated at not being heard, the few folks who are its champions appear to be growing frustrated that its opponents don't just shut up and go away. Mike Oakland, opinion editor of the *Olympian*, which has consistently boosted the Larida Passage project and minimized the magnitude of public objection, has been refusing to answer phone calls from some citizens who call to question the *Olympian*'s biased approach to the isthmus issue, and verbally abusing others. Although Oakland was unwilling to speak to *Works in Progress* staff, he recently berated a rezone opponent over the phone, shouting at her and calling her a liar. Councilmembers similarly have been showing the strain. Jeff Kingsbury recently came under fire when it was discovered that he called a citizen addressing the council an "idiot" on his Facebook page, and laughed at other folks speaking during Public Communications who were unaware that he was deriding them online. At a recent council meeting, Craig Ottavelli admonished the public for questioning his policy decisions, calling their objections "hurtful," while Joe Hyer similarly encouraged concerned citizens to "keep it positive."

As much as the council would like the public to shut up and take their lumps with a smile, it's not going to happen. Taking the will of the community more seriously now would save the city more pain and negativity in the future. An expensive, protracted legal battle is most assuredly in Olympia's future, at a time when city resources are dwindling, and much better uses for municipal funds could easily be found. Although no one wants litigation to become necessary, rezone opponents are optimistic that there are excellent grounds for challenging the zoning change. Olympia attorney Allen Miller referenced the 1982 case of *Sato Corporation v. Olympia*, which held that high rise buildings on the isthmus are in violation of the Shoreline Management Act. "It's crazy for the city to go forward with repeating the same error in allowing these types of buildings to potentially be there," said Miller. "There's good language in the [*Sato*] case," he remarked, adding that the courts, the Growth Management Hearings Board, and the Shoreline Hearings Board may all ultimately become involved in an appeal of the rezone.

Why?

Again and again, rezone opponents have questioned why the council is alienating the public for an unpopular project that looks increasingly impractical with every downturn of the stock market. The fervent support on the council for this unlikely project is mysterious, especially considering its political cost. "Why?" asked one activist who has opposed this project from the beginning. "What are they getting out of it?" As stated by former councilmember TJ Johnson, "Larida Passage is an example of the worst type of corporate welfare; the city is giving away a valuable public asset and getting nothing in return."

Although it is true that most of the rezone's supporters on the council received campaign contributions from Triway, and none of its opponents did [see chart], the relatively small amounts donated hardly represent a compelling reason to disregard the overwhelming objections to the project. Since the council did not openly deliberate on whether or not to pass the rezone, citizens are left wondering what their rationale for brushing off the will of the the public could possibly be. Could it be that they still have faith in trickle-down economics—that they think building luxury condos during a recession will somehow improve the local economy? Do they really believe that one high-end project can protect Olympia from the effects of a global recession? In the absence of public deliberations and a willingness to respond to the public, no better explanation can be imagined.

The Starbucks Foundation

Futurist
($5000 - $9999)
Mervyn's
POSSCA

Fanatics
($1000 - $4999)
The Alexander Family
Always Safe & Lock
Anonymous
Kathy Barner
Barnes & Noble
Dave & Kris Bartruff
Paul & Beth Berendt
The Brennan Family
Dan & Joyce Bruner
Georganne & Scott Copeland
Bianca & Eric Davis
Troy Fisher
The Flory Family
Charlie & Gretchen Gale
Gannett Foundation
Rob & Helena Rice
Renee C. Ries
Rotary Club of Olympia
Diane Rudeen
Safeco Insurance Company
The Seavey Family
Community Foundation
Starbucks Make Your Mark
Volunteer Program
The Shaughnessy Family
Bill Stoner & Barb Morson
The Target Foundation
Triway Enterprises
The Verschuyl Family
WSECU
Dan & Mary Weiss

Financiers
($500 - $999)
Ruth Andrews
Katherine Berndt &
Stephen Albrecht
Fred & Julie McDowell
Carol McKinley
The Microsoft Corporatio
Lyle Morse
Bill Nash
The Nelson Family
Olympia Federal Saving
The Ponzo Family
Coleen & Joe Powers
Shawn & Carissa Riley
Ray Rowell
Russell Investment Grou
Ronald & Anne Schafer
David & Lisa Seavey
The Sokol Family
The Swenddall-Nafziger
Squaxin Island Tribe
Tricia Sylwester
Venture Bank
Gary & Linda Wigle

Fans
($100 - $499)

Triway became a patron of the arts beginning in 2007. The list above is excerpted from the Capital Playhouse list of donors, from a 2008 program.

The puzzling politics of the isthmus controversy

by Gerald Reilly

A majority of the Olympia City Council appears ready to vote to approve a rezone of the downtown isthmus to permit the construction of high-rise luxury condominiums. This column is focused on the politics of the situation more than on the arguments for and against the rezone. These arguments have been widely discussed. Those in favor believe that developing very expensive housing in this unique and attractive location will be the catalyst for much desired "market rate" housing in Olympia's downtown. Those opposed believe that the proposal will "wall off " our waterfront, destroy the views from and to the Capitol Campus, and crush any real chance to turn the Isthmus into a great public park. From my perspective the arguments against the rezone are, by far, more persuasive. My purpose here, however, is to examine the politics of the issue.

> How will elected officials, in future elections, answer for their unwillingness to listen to overwhelming public sentiment on such an important issue?

Through all of the controversy, five members of the City Council have fervently supported the proposal. These are Mayor Mah and Councilpersons Machlis, Strub, Kingsbury, and Ottavelli. Sitting stoically through two days of public testimony that was overwhelmingly opposed to the rezone, receiving a Citizens' Initiative with over five thousand signatures requiring the city to study the feasibility of creating a park on the isthmus, and enduring countless communications from individual voters, these "fervent five" council members have not wavered from their position of support for the rezone.

During the public hearing, a strong supporter of the proposal remarked that this issue was settled during the last council election in November 2007, when Mayor Mah, and Councilpersons, Strub, and Ottavelli were elected. This was surprising to me, and many others who also voted for these three, to learn that they had allegedly committed to this project in the fall of 2007. Evidently, the speaker, who proudly made this pronouncement, knew what he was talking about. While, I have no quarrel with their freedom to support the proposal, I just wish I had this information at the time I voted for them. Perhaps it is my fault that I did not know.

At the outset of this public process, I had assumed that all members of the Council were ready to look at this rezone proposal objectively and were willing to receive, and take into serious account, public input. Thus far, it seems that I was mistaken in this assumption.

Unfortunately, the most likely way that this controversy now will unfold appears to be a very long, very expensive, and very divisive legal contest. This will leave the Isthmus in its current sad state, with deteriorating and vacant buildings, for many years into the future. Opponents of the rezone believe that it will be overturned during the appeal process. Although it is never possible to predict the outcome of a legal contest with certainty, we do know that it will take a long time to reach any final resolution. We also know that the economy has taken a drastic downturn. Many doubted, from the beginning, whether the proposed development was ever viable. It now seems even less likely to be feasible.

This leads to several political questions. Why would elected officials choose to invest their political equity in a proposal that will most likely never happen? How will elected officials, in future elections, answer for their unwillingness to listen to overwhelming public sentiment on such an important issue? Why would elected officials act on the rezone issue without waiting for the information regarding the park option that the initiative-driven study will provide?

Even though the process, thus far, seems to be driving towards a foreordained conclusion, we still have a faint hope that our elected officials will listen to the community, realize that the proposed project will likely never happen, wait for the results of the park study, pause the process, and begin to look for a win/win solution.

Jerry Reilly is Chair of the Isthmus Park Association and a past member and Chair of the Olympia Planning Commission. Comment on this article can be sent to him at jerryreilly@msn.com.

How the legal process works

The legal battle will begin if and when the City adopts an amendment to its Comprehensive Plan and Shoreline Master Program (SMP) raising the height limits on the isthmus. The SMP amendment would be sent by the City to the Department of Ecology for its review.

In the meantime, the Comp Plan amendment could be appealed to the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board (WWGMHB). If and when Ecology approved the SMP amendment, that approval could be appealed to the WWGMHB, which would probably consolidate the two cases into one for purposes of briefing and hearing.

The WWGMHB would then set up a briefing schedule and a hearing date. The hearing is based on the written record and testimony before the City; legal briefs and oral argument would set forth the rezone opponents' legal argument, based on the *Sato* case (*Sato Corporation v. Olympia*, 1982), that the rezone would violate the Growth Management Act and the Shorelines Management Act.

After the hearing, the WWGMHB would submit a decision. The process would take several months, so a decision on the rezone would not be issued before the fall of 2009. That decision would be appealable into the court system, which could take two years if the case went to the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court.

If the courts upheld the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the SMP, then permits for buildings would need to be obtained. Any permit issued by the City would be appealable to the Shorelines Hearings Board (SHB.) The SHB is different from the WWGMHB and would hold a de novo review of the permit, which means a completely new hearing on the issues with witnesses and exhibits. A SHB decision would be appealable into the courts which, again, could take two more years. All told, this process is anticipated to take four to six years.

Caring for our veterans

by Daisy Ouye

Poor conditions discovered at Walter Reed Hospital made headlines last year, spurring media attention and prompting investigations of Army Health Care facilities nationwide. Madigan at Fort Lewis was no exception, turning up some serious problems that needed to be addressed in regard to safety, medical treatment, living conditions and availability of care for those suffering Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues.

War wounds

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), a variant of concussion, has been called "the signature wound of the war on terror." Screening at Madigan has improved for TBI, which in turn has improved access to appropriate treatment. But with depression being a side effect of TBI, 43% of soldiers returning with mental health problems, and little discussion in the mainstream about the health effects of radioactive depleted uranium (DU) munitions, the true "signature wound" is yet to be revealed.

DU is a byproduct of nuclear power production. Truly safe nuclear weapon deployment is impossible—through the explosion of this weaponry, waste is ground into nanoparticles and dispersed into the air that our troops breathe. It is no coincidence that the problems covered heavily by mainstream news, such as TBI, get addressed, while other killers like DU remain unknown to the masses, including doctors and many of those affected. General Electric, which produces nuclear fuel (and waste), is the parent company of NBC. The health problems which are caused by "terrorists" are widely discussed, but the health problems created by American corporations are largely overlooked; this is the way of the corporate mainstream media.

Staff Sergeant Matt Bumpus died after exposure to radiation and chemicals in Iraq, a two year battle with leukemia, and eight proud years of service to his country in the US Army. He and his family had previously been denied coverage for his illness. The file of this Fort Lewis soldier was just reopened. Bumpus urged troops, through his website, to get what's called a Gulf War Exam, which he discovered too late to save his own health. It's the right of any soldier, but it must be requested. It may help with diagnosis and treatment for exposures to contaminants. Recent US acknowledgment of "Gulf War Syndrome" as a legitimate illness may also help veterans get better coverage. Pyridostigmine bromide (PB), a pill to protect against nerve agents, and pesticide exposure were cited as the cause of a number of health problems that fall under the label Gulf War Syndrome or GWS. The acknowledgment does not cite exposure to DU as a contributor and has not been applied to soldiers suffering the same illnesses from the current invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rosalie Bertel, Doug Rokke and Asaf Duracowicz are among the nuclear scientists who have studied DU and proven the dangers of its use. Exposure can cause health problems ranging from headaches, digestive problems and kidney stones, to muscular sclerosis, cancers and birth defects in offspring (obviously passing contamination and health problems to sexual partners). It is the Agent Orange of today, and if our media truly informed the public, the use of DU and the damage it causes would be front-page news.

The psychological costs of war

The nature of the so-called "War on Terror" is that troops never get to leave the front lines of what seems to be an open-ended conflict. An active duty soldier recently informed me that troops are directed to "hand out lead, not bread," and they don't always know who they're fighting. The father of one Iraq vet told me his son went AWOL because he was having trouble coping with his participation in home raids, and was especially haunted by memories involving children.

I have had the opportunity to meet many active duty soldiers. When they tell me they've been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, I ask them what they'd like us to know about what's happening. I get mixed reactions to this question. Some are taken aback by it, and want some time to think it over. Some just shrug, maybe because they don't want to think about it at all. Others tell me their stories.

> When they tell me they've been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, I ask them what they'd like us to know about what's happening. I get mixed reactions to this question.

One of the last soldiers I spoke to was anxiously awaiting discharge after serving three tours in Iraq. Without hesitation he said, "There's a lot of corruption, trash everywhere and people being blown up. Dead bodies. I saw a lot of dead bodies." I could see the pain in his eyes.

Then there's Chris, "E-4 Specialist." He was discharged but still in uniform, adorned with his own non-issue patches. He was proud of his skill, and his courage. But he felt completely betrayed by the Army. Chris received a dishonorable discharge. He explained that he didn't pass a physical due to a knee injury he sustained when reprimanded by a superior from another unit. "There's a lot of fighting amongst the ranks," he said. "It's like being in prison—only in prison, you get showers."

He was upset about putting out oil fires when he doesn't even have a car. He was well-informed and thought others should be. He wondered how he could be sent to war for his country, find out it was all based on lies, and then be left with nothing. Chris is one of half a million homeless vets. That's 25% of the homeless population in America.

Mainstream media covered the infamous story of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib, but failed to uncover the real story. There is insurmountable evidence of widespread systematic torture, ordered from the highest ranks. This is a far cry from the image sold to young recruits. It all amounts to the US government asking things of our troops that go far beyond what they signed up for.

Inadequate mental health support

The types of injuries and mental scars troops suffer, along with difficulty pursuing treatment, pose many challenges, including that of suicide risk. A CBS investigation on veteran suicide and a pending class action lawsuit filed by a coalition of Iraq War Vets against the Department of Veteran Affairs, have brought mental health care to the forefront. The investigation reported that the Department of Defense was claiming there were 2200 veteran suicide deaths between 1995 and 2007, a twelve year span. Evidence CBS obtained from the Department of Veteran's Affairs gathered from a total of 45 states proved that the number of veterans whose lives were lost to suicide, was 6,256 in 2005 alone. The lawsuit cites long waits and inadequate care as the cause.

Vietnam Veterans of America and Veterans of Modern Warfare are also filing suit against the VA over "unacceptable delays." They say, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

Like all of our Army and VA facilities, improvements are being made at Madigan. Nevertheless, the facility is extremely understaffed, as more doctors are deploying and, as one Madigan staff member explained, others are just "burning out." There is a growing concern there about how the highly addictive drug oxycontin and others like it that are being prescribed to injured troops. While doctors often recognize signs of addiction, sometimes shared by the spouse, they fear backlash for not providing care when a soldier comes in asking for something. Raising red flags nationwide, prescriptions for narcotic painkillers have gone from 30,000 per month before the Iraq invasion, to 50,000 per month today, along with a rise in the number of people seeking drug abuse treatment.

One veteran testified before Congress at the Winter Soldier hearings that, in Iraq they hand out pain medicines "like candy." In the absence of psychological care, these narcotics are commonly used to escape mental, as well as physical pain. The combination of depression and substance abuse puts these combat vets in the highest risk group for taking their own lives.

If we listen to veterans, young and old, they are trying to tell us their truths in the cafes, on the streets, at the ports and in the courtrooms. Resoundingly, they bring into question the appropriateness of the actions of this "Global War on Terror" and why it continues without better care for its warriors.

President-elect Barack Obama vows to take care of our veterans. We all need to hold him to it.

Daisy Ouye is a frequent contributor to Works In Progress.

Providing outreach

Mental health care is crucial, but we can all provide outreach by understanding the fundamentals of suicide prevention, including the directive put forth in the Army's new ACE program. ACE is an acronym for "Ask, Care, Escort." ***Ask:*** If you see warning signs, ask if they are thinking about suicide (studies show that bringing it up the subject of suicide does not make it more likely); ***Care:*** Listen and show you care, do not judge or try to solve their problem; ***Escort:*** Get help, don't keep it a secret, remove firearms from access, and don't leave them alone.

Wallet-sized cards stating this directive are part of an effort to raise awareness among active duty troops. Also remember the high risk factor applies to all war veterans.

We should be aware of other factors that put them at risk such as previous suicide attempts, depression, alcohol or substance abuse, family history of suicide, feelings of hopelessness, impulsive or aggressive tendencies, loss, physical illness, easy access to lethal methods, unwillingness to seek help due to perceived stigma, local raise in suicide rates, and isolation.

There are warning signs specific to vets, like calling up old friends, cleaning guns and medals, and wearing all or part of an old uniform. Other warning signs include increased substance abuse, talking about death or suicide, giving things away, social withdrawal, recent break up of a relationship, or news reports that an individual may identify with. There is always help: Crisis Centers, applicable clergy or spiritual leaders, and hospitals.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Veterans can push "1" once connected or identify themselves as a vet. There is also a number you can call for outreach at the VA. If a veteran exhibits warning signs anyone can call 1-800-562-2308 and give them that veterans name and phone number and tell them the situation and need for outreach.

Jim Page
GI Rights Coffee House
Saturday, January 10, 8 pm
$15

Coffee Strong
15109 Union (Tillicum)
(253) 581-1565 or
(253) 863-6617

A strange concept of "security"

Who's calling the shots when the US State Department bars entry for a Colombian priest?

by John Laun (Colombia Support Network) and Larry Birns (Council on Hemispheric Affairs)

Father Rafael Gallego was originally scheduled to speak in Olympia on Tuesday, Nov. 18. The State Department denied his visa with the guidance of the Colombian military. The event was still held to educate the public with films about Colombia. They can block the messenger but not his message.

November 13, 2008—A number of days ago, the US Consulate in Bogotá, Colombia denied a visa to Catholic priest Rafael de Jesus Gallego, after he had been given assurances through the Embassy's Human Rights Office that it would be routinely granted to him. Father Rafael was later told that the visa had been denied for "security" reasons.

Father Rafael, whose visit to the United States was sponsored by a number of US groups and individuals and organized by the Madison, Wisconsin-based Colombia Support Network (CSN), had been scheduled to speak in 10 cities (including a meeting with Congressional staffers in Washington, DC) during his 4-week tour of the United States and Canada.

Gallego was expected to describe his pastoral work in his home parish of Tiquisio in Bolivar Department, in north central Colombia. There he leads a flock of small-scale miners and peasants, whose livelihood and property are today being threatened by foreign multinational mining corporations which are seeking (with the support of Colombian authorities) to obtain access, possibly by illegal means, to rich gold deposits, some of which are located on their property. These corporate interests at times have received support from the strong-armed methods of Colombia's paramilitary forces, with the tacit cooperation of the Colombian armed forces.

During his tour, Father Rafael was also scheduled to appear on a panel on community radio initiatives in Montreal, Canada, at which he was to share his experience working with some residents of Tiquisio to develop a community radio station.

Some senior Colombian church leaders who supported Father Rafael's visa application were given the impression that it had been denied in response to opposition to his visit from the Colombian military. At first glance, the State Department's action appears indefensible given the almost daily scandals perpetrated by the Uribe government and the Colombian military.

The most recent scandal, involving what are called "false positives," involves kidnapping of innocent noncombatants by Colombian Army units in one area, taking them to a different area of the country and murdering them, then turning up their bodies as "guerrillas killed in combat," and receiving rewards for these killings, such as increased pay or more vacation time. Each of them is a "positive" in the Army's lingo, i.e., a person supposedly killed in the Army's long battle against the FARC or ELN guerrillas, but they are "false" because they were not in fact guerrillas, nor were they killed in combat.

While the State Department would be hard-pressed to create a case that Father Rafael, who has worked tirelessly for the well-being of his parishioners, represents anything like a security threat to the United States, it is true that his name has appeared on a "hit list" issued by the "Aguilas Negra" (Black Eagles) paramilitaries, who operate with near-impunity in the Tiquisio area and throughout much of the rest of Colombia and whose membership in Colombia's paramilitaries rightly classifies them as "terrorists."

The Aguilas Negras surely do not want Father Rafael to travel abroad to publicize their misdeeds. His visa denial, which was done by the US Consulate in Bogotá in apparent consultation with Colombian authorities, begs for a closer look at what the connections are between the Uribe Administration, the Colombian Army and the paramilitaries. It further illustrates the fact that the Colombian military has cordial ties to the Aguilas Negras.

Even though the commander of the Colombian army was forced to resign a few days ago as a result of the "false positives" scandal, the State Department has no problem in vetoing the right of highly regarded US groups focused on Colombian-American relations, like the CSN, to invite a humble parish priest to this country who is renowned for his good deeds, while almost routinely providing suspect Colombian Army officers visas to come to the United States to study in the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly the School of the Americas). Furthermore, the US government has financed the Colombian armed forces through Plan Colombia at the rate of more than five billion dollars over the past decade, while tolerating egregious misdeeds by that nation's military.

What is most remarkable is where the US government seems to be establishing its human rights benchmarks as a result of guidance from the Colombian military (with the support of President Alvaro Uribe and the US Embassy in Bogotá), in an atmosphere where the Colombian President has done less than nothing to address the problem of having more than four million internally-displaced people (now more than any other country in the world) and upwards of 50 pro-government legislators facing indictment by the country's prosecutor and Supreme Court over their ties to Colombia's illegal, terrorist paramilitaries, as well as the continuing threats against and murders of labor union leaders. This is but part of the reason why a pending bilateral Free Trade Agreement with Colombia has been turned down by the US Congress, including a vote against the measure cast by Senator Barack Obama. We would hope that the ban against Father Rafael's visit would be overturned by Washington once the new President is inaugurated, given that the President-elect voted against the FTA with Colombia on human rights grounds.

> Washington should welcome, not shun, genuine democrats who, like Father Rafael, work courageously and at great personal risk to improve their society by translating theoretical rights into practical ones.

The CSN—along with COHA and associated US organizations, which helped plan Father Rafael's trip—has compiled a lengthy list of abuses and corrupt acts fomented by the Colombian military.

CSN and the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) are continuing to make representations to US and Colombian officials condemning unprincipled actions of the Colombian government and Washington's shared complicity in its stalwart defense of its Colombian allies, including its veto of Father Rafael's planned visit. The expectation is that under an Obama administration respect for life and observance of human rights will be a centerpiece of its foreign policy, and one would hope that the new administration in Washington would take immediate steps to inculcate the staff of its embassy and consulate in Bogotá to uphold the sense of rectitude and honorable deportment that should accurately project US domestic values abroad.

In recognition of the transgressions now being perpetrated by Colombian authorities, which now are appearing on the front pages of US newspapers, Washington should welcome, not shun, genuine democrats who, like Father Rafael, work courageously and at great personal risk to improve their society by translating theoretical rights into practical ones. Such potential guests should be praised and rewarded for having put US democratic values to the test. The State Department's action in cancelling Father Rafael's visit was a shameful action that needs to be condemned and reversed.

Father Rafael Gallego, waving some sort of cryptic terrorist symbol that only the US State Department can interpret—with the help of their friends in the Colombian military.

CSN is asking concerned citizens to conact your representatives to demand an official audit of the operation of the US Embassy and Consulate in Bogotá, in order to determine the basis on which visa denials to persons such as Father Gallego are premised and to assign responsibility for these erroneous, harmful decisions. Visit colombiasupport.net.

Olympia Food Co-op

Join Our Staff Collective!

The Co-op accepts employment applications at all times, and hires successful applicants as openings arise.

Visit us at: www.olympiafood.coop

Media silence doesn't mean all's well in Gaza

by Amy Goodman

As President-elect Barack Obama focuses on the meltdown of the U.S. economy, another fire is burning: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

You may not have heard much lately about the disaster in the Gaza Strip. That silence is intentional: The Israeli government has barred international journalists from entering the occupied territory. Last week, executives from the Associated Press, New York Times, Reuters, CNN, BBC and other news organizations sent a letter of protest to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert criticizing his government's decision to bar journalists from entering Gaza.

Israel has virtually sealed off the Gaza Strip and cut off aid and fuel shipments. A spokesman for Israel's Defense Ministry said Israel was displeased with international media coverage, which he said inflated Palestinian suffering and did not make clear that Israel's measures were in response to Palestinian violence.

A cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, the group that won Palestinian elections nearly three years ago and controls Gaza, broke down after an Israeli raid killed six Hamas militants two weeks ago. More Israeli raids have followed, killing approximately 17 Hamas members, and Palestinian militants have fired dozens of rockets into southern Israel, injuring several people.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has criticized Israel over its blockade of the overcrowded Gaza, home to close to 1.5 million Palestinians. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency is warning that Gaza faces a humanitarian "catastrophe" if Israel continues to blockade aid from reaching the territory.

The sharply divided landscape of Israel and the occupied territories is familiar ground for South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He won the Nobel Peace Prize for his opposition to apartheid in South Africa. Tutu was in New York last week to receive the Global Citizens Circle award. I sat down with him at the residence of the South African vice consul.

Tutu reflected on the Israeli occupation: "Coming from South Africa...and looking at the checkpoints...when you humiliate a people to the extent that they are being—and, yes, one remembers the kind of experience we had when we were being humiliated—when you do that, you're not contributing to your own security."

Tutu said the embargo must be lifted. "The suffering is unacceptable. It doesn't promote the security of Israel or any other part of that very volatile region," he said. "There are very, very many in Israel who are opposed to what is happening."

Tutu points to the outgoing Israeli prime minister. In September, Olmert made a stunning declaration to Yedioth Ahronoth, the largest Israeli newspaper. He said that Israel should withdraw from nearly all territory captured in the 1967 Middle East war in return for peace with the Palestinians and Syria: "I am saying what no previous Israeli leader has ever said: We should withdraw from almost all of the territories, including in East Jerusalem and in the Golan Heights." Olmert said that traditional Israeli defense strategists had learned nothing from past experiences and that they seemed stuck in the considerations of the 1948 War of Independence. He said: "With them, it is all about tanks and land and controlling territories and controlled territories and this hilltop and that hilltop. All these things are worthless."

> Israel has virtually sealed off the Gaza Strip and cut off aid and fuel shipments.

Olmert appears to have come closer to his daughter's point of view. In 2006, Dana Olmert was among 200 people who gathered outside the home of the Israeli army chief of staff and chanted "murderer" as they protested Israeli killings of Palestinians (Archbishop Tutu was blocked from entering Gaza in his U.N.- backed attempts to investigate those killings). Ehud Olmert recently resigned over corruption allegations, but remains prime minister until a new government is approved by parliament.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki criticized Olmert for waiting until now to call for an end to the settlements: "We wish we heard this personal opinion when Olmert was prime minister, not after he resigned. I think it is a very important commitment, but it came too late. We hope this commitment will be fulfilled by the new Israeli government."

Israel is a top recipient of U.S. military aid. Archbishop Tutu says of the Israeli- Palestinian conflict, "When that is resolved, what we will find (is) that the tensions between the West and...a large part of the Muslim world...evaporates." He said of Obama, "I pray that this new president will have the capacity to see we've got to do something here...for the sake of our children."

The Democrats owe Jimmy Carter an apology

by Ralph Nader

Now that the season of electoral expediency is over, Barack Obama owes Jimmy Carter an apology.

At the Democratic National Convention in Denver, the Party denied Jimmy Carter the traditional invitation to speak that is accorded its former presidents.

According to *The Jewish Daily Forward*, "Carter's controversial views on Israel cost him a place on the podium at the Democratic Party convention in late August, senior Democratic operatives acknowledged to the *Forward*."

Silencing Carter, who negotiated the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement, involved behind the scenes tensions between supporters of the hard-line AIPAC lobby and those Democrats who argued both respect and free speech to let Carter join Bill Clinton on the stage and address a nationwide audience.

First, there was a compromise offer to let Carter speak but only on domestic policy subjects. This would have kept him from mentioning his views on securing peace between the Israelis and Palestinians through a two-state solution essentially back to the 1967 borders. He previously elaborated his analysis and recommendations in his 2006 bestseller titled *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*.

Even this astonishing restriction on the former president was unacceptable to the dictatorial censors. They wanted nothing from the deliberate, candid Georgian short of complete exclusion.

It is false to attribute this shutdown to the opinions of American Jews, a majority of whom polls show support a two-state solution and disagree on other issues with the AIPAC lobby, as recently documented by *The Nation* magazine's Eric Alterman.

The Convention planners, with the full knowledge and approval of their candidate, Barack Obama, arranged to have a short video on Carter's work during the post-Katrina crisis followed by a walk across the stage by Carter and his wife Rosalynn to applause.

Carter's opponents did not hide their efforts to keep him from speaking. They spoke openly to the media. They disliked Carter's recognition of Palestinian suffering under the Israeli government's military and colonial occupation, the blockades, the violations of UN Resolutions and international law. He championed the work of the Israeli and Palestinian peace movements who together have worked out a detailed two-state accord that is supported by a majority of their respective peoples.

Little of what Carter wrote and spoke about has not been said by many prominent Israelis, leading newspapers and columnists for years. Hundreds of Israeli reservists, called refuseniks, have declined to fight in the West Bank or Gaza, though they will defend Israel's borders to the utmost.

Clearly, there is more freedom to speak about injustice against Palestinians and be critical of government policy in the Knesset and in the Israeli media than there is in the Congress or at American political conventions. It is a shame of the Democratic Party and its new leader that they forgot about civil liberties for differing viewpoints and covered it up for unknowing television viewers with the video scam.

Jimmy Carter knew fully what the Party did to him. But he played the loyal Democrat as a good sport and avoided a ruckus without even a public grumble. Privately, however, he and Rosalynn were very upset, believing that political pandering prevents the United States from playing a key role in peace-making between the powerful Israelis and their Palestinian neighbors.

Pandering is what Barack Obama perfected in his address right after the Denver nomination to the AIPAC convention. During his trip to Israel-Palestine, he refused to comment on the plight of the occupied Palestinians or the humanitarian crisis in encircled Gaza that over the past year's strife has produced Gazan civilian casualties at a rate of over 400 times those inflicted on Israeli civilians.

In a March 2008 poll by the respected *Haaretz* newspaper, sixty-four percent of Israelis supported "direct negotiations with Hamas"—the elected government of Gaza that now accepts a two-state solution back to the 1967 borders.

This is an auspicious time for vigorous peacemaking by the new Obama Administration as a steady, honest broker. The serious offer by the Arab League in 2002 for such an agreement, coupled with diplomatic and economic relations with the Arab countries was reiterated dramatically on November 10 with a full page message in the *New York Times*. Headlined "Peace is Possible: More than 50 Arab and Muslim Countries Agree," the Center for Middle East Peace reminds Americans of that Arab Peace Initiative, reiterated in 2007, and supported by the fifty-seven member nations of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (*www.centerpeace.org*). The dramatic declaration, replete with all the flags of these countries, ended with the plea: "Let us not miss this opportunity."

The Israeli government has not engaged this long-standing offer by the Arab League. Without Barack Obama taking a strong initiative in America's national interest, it is unlikely that there will be any serious engagement. A sign that he is determined to set the peace process on course is whether he expresses his regrets about the intolerance and suppression of a former president whose views on the Palestinian question he once shared in Chicago before he began the quest for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination.

Jimmy Carter—the early peacemaker between Israel and Egypt (for which he won the Nobel Peace Prize)—has remained the most steadfast, prominent American friend that the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have in securing a stable peace in that region. The new President Obama should welcome Mr. Carter's wise and seasoned counsel.

Tired of the ***Olympian***'s biased reporting?

Support ***Works in Progress***!

Mainstream news media keep letting us down.
We need our own local independent media.
Works in Progress is part of the solution.
Please contribute so we can continue publishing.
We really need your contributions now.

THANK YOU!

Here is my donation of: [_] $100 [_] $50 [_] $35 [_] $20 [_] Other_____

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Chris Stegman

(360) 705-3528

OLYMPIA PAINTING EXCHANGE

INTERIOR/EXTERIOR

OLYMPPEO09QA FREE ESTIMATES

Reflections on Obama's election

by Marco Rosaire Rossi

I was there: Grant Park, November 4, at the time when Barack Obama was announced as president-elect of the United States. It was impossible to disregard the electricity within the crowd. Tens of thousands of people—most of them from Chicago, but some of them from other cities, even other states—had gathered to bear witness to the election of the first black president of the United States. They crammed themselves into the area, peeking up over each other to get a view of the giant screens showing CNN's coverage of the polls. Some were calculating each result, trying to narrow in the exact moment that they could know for certain the fate of the election; some were sending themselves through jubilant highs with anticipation of what an Obama win would mean, followed by shattering lows of a McCain victory, followed by another jubilant high, and so on; some just waited, either because they were radicals who felt somewhat indifferent about the election choices, or because they were attracted to Grant Park that night more out of a sense for history than a sense for politics.

In general though, the feeling of the crowd was optimistic but cautious. Results for the polls from the east coast were announced hours before anyone had even set foot in Grant Park. They confirmed what many pollsters were predicting the week before: since the collapse of Wall Street, Obama had taken a commanding lead, capturing the national psyche with this rhetoric of "change" and aid to Main Street. He was going to win this election by a wide electoral college margin.

Still, many people were doubtful. With two stolen elections under the Republican's belt, there were expectations by some that—despite Obama's lead—they would be able to steal this one, too. Also, for some people the idea that the hoi polloi of the United States, a nation founded on racism, could elect a black president still seemed unfeasible; it was like a distant dream, possible in a generation or two, but not now, not only a few years after Katrina.

But Obama did win, and the symbolic importance of the event on African-Americans was undeniable. White and black—everyone—felt a wave of joyous sympathy when the CNN camera showed a close-up of Jesse Jackson weeping when he heard the news that Obama had become president. After the rally, many people poured into the streets, singing and dancing, some wearing t-shirts which read, "Yes We Did!" On my walk home I heard one black man tell a line of white police officers, "Things are going to be different now. Our guy is in office. That means you got be good to us, that's right. All of you got to be good to us now." I heard some African-Americans saying they have waited their whole lives for that day, while others were still in disbelief that this day had actually arrived.

In following weeks, especially in Chicago, the euphoria of the Obama victory has split. For some—the liberal wing of Obama's supporters—it has sustained. These people hold out the highest hopes for the Obama presidency: hoping that he will enact his proposed green "New Deal" to revitalize the US economy; hoping that he will end the war in Iraq and bring the troops home; hoping that he will be able to regain the trust and respect of the international community.

For others—Obama's progressive wing—the euphoria has gradually subsided; progressives are at times reluctantly returning to the harsh reality of the difficulty of creating fundamental changes in the United States. Despite the lofty rhetoric for "change," Obama has assembled his administration with known politicos—mostly from the Clinton era, but also from Bush Jr.'s administration, like Robert Gates. His economic plan, though much better than anything Bush has ever offered, still leaves much to be desired. It fails to address some of the major issues facing people in the US today, including the mortgage crisis, the closing of the federal deficit, and the people's desire for a single-payer universal healthcare system. His foreign policy decisions, though not as aggressive and foolish as those made by the the Bush administration, still do not recant the assumed right of American elites to military intervention.

The differences in feelings toward the Obama presidency represent a division within the left in the United States. The liberals—whose opposition to Bush may have given progressives a false sense of strength—are ready to take power and revive the glory days of the Kennedy/Johnson years. They are happy as long as they have the power. The progressives, on the other hand, don't share in the enthusiasm because they remember those years in terms of Vietnam, a crackdown on campus dissent, and a selling out of civil rights. Essentially, they see the Obama presidency as a triumph over racism, not a triumph of the progressive left.

Either way, the election of Obama does represent a turning point, or rather an opening, in the US political landscape. Whether this opportunity will mean anything—even in regards to race—in the coming years will depend on more than Obama alone. It will depend on how the American people will react to this event: whether they will become apathetic towards the centers of power, or defend them as some have already (downplaying the heinous record of some of Obama's advisors and cabinet leaders), or continue to challenge them in the hope of creating a still better tomorrow. I know in Chicago, the liberal political elites see this moment as a cause for celebration, while many community activists see this as a moment to get back to work.

Marco Rosaire Rossi is a frequent contributor to Works In Progress.

Photo by Diana Arens

Local reproductive rights activist Lois Ashway Walker dies

Works in Progress was saddened to learn of the recent death of Lois Walker, local reproductive rights activist.

Lois was a familiar sight at local protests, riding her bright red scooter and carrying a sign that said, "Honk if you love birth control."

Although she was over 80, Lois was more energetic and committed than many activists a quarter of her age. She spent countless hours picketing outside of Ralph's Thriftway, in protest of the store's refusal to carry emergency contraception in its pharmacy, as well as counter-protesting outside of Planned Parenthood when anti-choice picketers gathered there on Fridays with grisly signs depicting late term abortions.

Lois put her journalism training to work writing letters to the editor, as well as to the Pharmacy Board, as they deliberated over public policy regarding access to Plan B emergency contraception.

Her upbeat, energetic participation and lively presence was treasured by the Olympia community. She will be missed.

Memorial donations may be made in Lois' name to Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 434 West 33rd Street, New York, NY 10001, or to Turning Pointe, PO Box 2014, Shelton WA 98584.

▸ **OLYMPIAN** continued from page 5

But as compelling as Jacobs' testimony was, there was much more to be said on the matter and a few of us went ahead and did so, referencing the rezone in the process.

Although we don't know exactly what kinds of comments Councilmember Strub referred to when she told the *Olympian* that "she and other council members have faced 'constant abuse and bullying,'" the Council meeting on Nov 25 may have been instructive.

This meeting occurred on the same day that the *Olympian* published its editorial expressing outrage over the attacks on Councilmember Kingsbury, and broadly generalized that outrage to other forms of "personal attacks" against the Council as a whole. As I was in attendance at the meeting that night, I noted then and later as I viewed it online, that public comments were, without exception, civil, well-spoken, and free of acrimony. Yet, Councilmembers Joe Hyer and Craig Ottavelli found cause to complain.

Hyer couched his complaint in "positive" terms and addressed them to Bonnie Jacobs: "You've talked positively, not what we shouldn't do but what we should do, and I thank you for that because all too often we hear just too negative of things about stopping, and not doing, things."

But every positive has a negative flip side and visa versa: if you are *for* a park on the isthmus, you are *against* the rezone; if you were *against* repealing the Nuclear Free Zone Ordinance, you were *for* keeping the ordinance. Hyer's admonition is simply designed to limit what people feel is permissible to say and how they may say it.

> Mayor Doug Mah "said if these attacks escalate, they will have a chilling effect on public participation." That may be, but if Mah and other councilmembers are concerned about public participation, they have a funny way of showing it.

Ottavelli began his remarks by thanking people for the positive things that were said, but then added, in a grave tone reminiscent of that day's editorial, "Not all of the comments have been positive. I've heard my colleagues and myself accused of insensitivity and uncaring and the list goes on of all the derogatory, hurtful comments [which he declined to cite]. ... to accuse any member of this body of not caring or being unethical ... I don't believe that helps the dialogue ...So I do hope that those sorts of accusations will come to an end."

Ottavelli's characterization of public comments being "derogatory" or "hurtful" apparently applied to anything in disagreement with the Council's policies, and at no point did he address the substance of a single comment which he characterized in that way.

If the public comments at this meeting are examples of what either the Council or the *Olympian* editors consider to be "personal attacks" which must "come to an end," then essentially what they're saying is, they would prefer that we not speak at all.

Between them, the *Olympian* and the City Council wield a lot of power in this community. Unless openly and relentlessly challenged, they can lay claim, without evidence, to what constitutes "mainstream" opinion or what represents the interests of their constituents. Challenges to their agenda, however civil or well-substantiated, will always be dismissed as "negative," "mean-spirited," "anti-troop," "divisive," and "fringe." Through shame and intimidation, they will obfuscate the facts as they seek to marginalize their challengers.

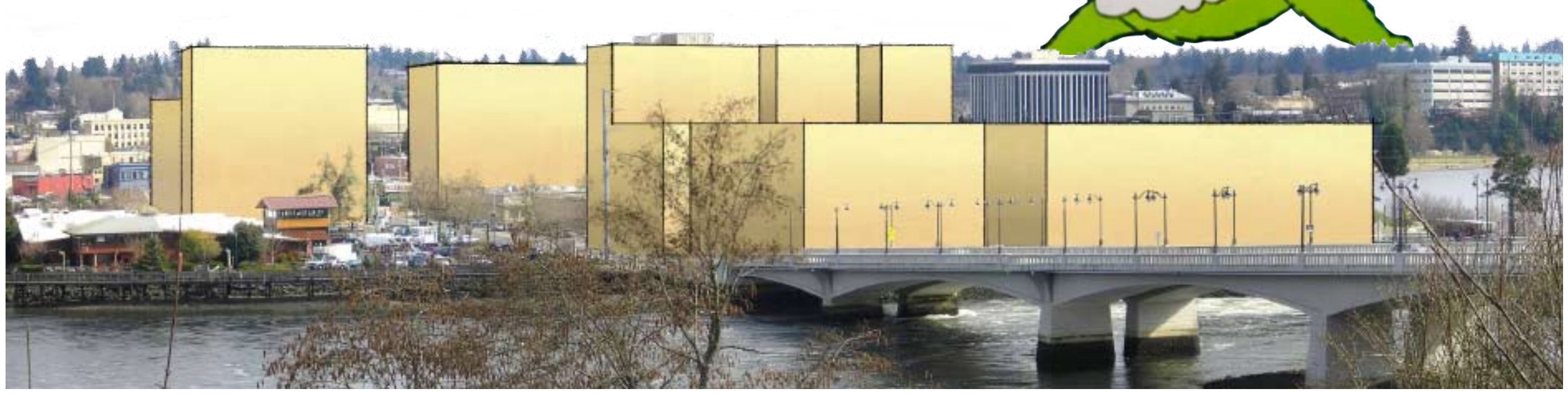
But the truth has a way of shining through as long as there are enough people willing to stand up and openly speak it. And truth—whether it be calling a nuclear-armed submarine a "killing machine" or an "unethical" policy decision for what it is—is the only measure of our words that should matter.

A follow-up to this article, focusing on the lack of accountability by both the Olympian *and the City Council, will appear in next month's* Works in Progress.

Volume 19, No. 8 December 2008 FREE

WORKS IN PROGRESS

COMING SOON TO AN OLYMPIA CITY HALL NEAR YOU:



Plus...The Olympian explains the difference between "Hate Speech" and "Free Speech"!

Jeff Kingsbury

Hate Speech

Rhenda Strub

Hate Speech

TJ Johnson

Free Speech

Works in Progress
PO Box 295
Olympia WA 98507